

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
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FM AMEMBASSY ACCRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2597

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ACCRA 1951

LONDON FOR SEITZ

E.O. 11652:\$

TAGS: PINT, PINS, PGOV, GH

SUBJ: US/UK ULATERAL TALKS--GHANA'S POLITICAL AND
ECONOMIC PROSCCTS

REF: (A) AF/W DRAFT MEMO TO AF/I OF 2/20/78 (NOTAL);
(B) ACCRA 1873 (NOTAL); (C) ACCRA 1864 (NOTAL)

1. WE HAVE REVIEWED REF (A) AND HAVE FOLLOWING COMMENTS,
WHICH MAY BE USEFUL TO AF/W IN MARCH 14 MEETING WITH UK.

2. MARCH 30 REFERENDUM ON UNION GOVERNMENT: DRAFT
ADVANCES VIEW THAT "REFERENDUM WILL BE HANDLED IN A FAIRLY
HONEST MANNER AND THAT ACHEAMPONG'S UNION GOVERNMENT
PROPOSALS WILL WIN AT LEAST TWO-THIRDS OF THE VOTES
(PERHAPS AS HIGH AS 85 PERCENT)." WHILE THIS REMAINS
POSSIBLE, WE NOW BELIEVE THAT WHILE UNION GOVERNMENT IS
LIKELY TO BE "APPROVED" IN REFERENDUM, MARGIN IS LIK6
TO BE MUCH NARROWER THAN WE HAD BELIEVED EARLIER. IN
RECENT WEEKS THERE HAS BEEN A PRONOUNCED GROUNDSWELL
OF OPPOSITION TO UNION GOVERNMENT, DUE CHIEFLY TO
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CONTINUED DETERIORATION OF GHANA'S ECONOMY AND IN
PROTEST TO ACHEAMPONG REGIME'S CORRUPTION, MISMANAGE-
MENT AND BLATANT OVERSELLING OF UNION GOVERNMENT.
ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER ABBWN IS WORKING FOR AN HONEST
REFERERENDUM BUT HE MAY WELL BE OUTMANEUVERED BY
PRO-UNION GOVERNMENT FORCES (REF B). THERE IS A VERY
GOTF CHANCE REFERENDUM WILL EITHER BE RIGGED OR WILL

BE MARKED BY NUMEROUS

IRREGULARITIES. IN VIEW OF

GROWING OPPOSITION, IT IS EVEN CONCEIVABLE THAT
ACHEAMPONG MIGHT DELAY OR CANCEL REFERENDUM, CLAIMING
HIS OPPONENTS PLAN TO DISRUPT IT, BUT THIS WOULD MERELY
POSTPONE DAY OF RECKONING AT THE POLLS. IN THE
INTERIM, OPPOSITION TO HIS RULE WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY
CONTINUE TO GROW. ON BALANCE, THEREFORE, WE FEEL
REFERENDUM WILL PROBABLY BE HELD ON SCHEDULE BUT THAT,
REGARDLESS OF OUTCOME, POTENTIAL FOR CLASHES BETWEEN
GOVERNMENT AND ITS CRITICS WILL REMAIN HIGH. WE DO NOT
BELIEVE THAT THE REFERENDUM WILL END THE BURGEONING
OPPOSITION TO ACHEAMPONG.

3. PROSPECTS FOR ECONOMIC REFORMS: TEAM HAS
CANCELLED APRIL VISIT TO ACCRA WHICH IT HAD PLANNED TO RESTATE NEED
FOR ECONOMIC STABILIZATION POLICIES. WE UNDERSTAND BOTH
IMF AND IBRD FEEL SUCH VISITS USELESS WITHOUT
CREDIBLE SIGNAL THAT GHANA PLANS TO ADOPT NECESSARY
ECONOMIC MEASURES. COMMISSIONERS FOR FINANCE, TRADE
AND ECONOMIC PLANNING AND OTHER TECHNOCRATS ARE PUTTING
TOGETHER A PACKAGE OF GHANA'S OWN PROPOSALS FOR REFORM
BUT THEY WILL FACE AN UPHILL BATTLE GETTING
ACHEAMPONG TO AGREE TO BUDGET BALANCING, DEVALUATION
OR OTHER AUSTERE AND ONCE
POLITICALLY DIFFICULT
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MEASURES. (SEPTTEL FOLLOWS)

4. FOOD AID: GOG REQUEST FOR 40,000 TONS OF FOOD
(REF C) WAS MADE AFTER DRAFT WRITTEN BUT MIGHT
PROFITABLY BE EXPLORED WITH BRITISH, AS WE ARE DOING
HERE (SEPTTEL). SMITH

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